DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 266 398 CG 018 878

AUTHOR Fox, Dennis R.
TITLE Personal Autonomy, Psychological Sense of Community, and Political Ideology.
PUB DATE Aug 85
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (93rd, Los Angeles, CA, August 23-27, 1985).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adults; Capitalism; Communism; Conservatism; Individual Differences; *Individualism; Liberalism; *Personal Autonomy; *Political Attitudes; *Self Evaluation (Individuals); *Social Values; Values
IDENTIFIERS *Collectivism

ABSTRACT

Political debates often mask underlying differences in people's assumptions about natural behaviors and appropriate values. Ten individuals who had written letters to newspapers from nonmainstream perspectives (from right-wing libertarian to left-wing revolutionary communist) participated in three or four intensive, open-ended, semistructured interviews directed by a flexible interview guide. A qualitative thematic content analysis of the interviews revealed five general themes: (1) difficulty of political self-definition; (2) importance of looking at issues in context; (3) rejection of mainstream assumptions; (4) belief that the United States is a sick society; and (5) desire to influence others. Three additional themes differentiated between four Individualists, who had in common a belief in overlapping aspects of right-libertarian, procapitalist political ideology, and five Collectivists, who presented differing political perspectives on the anticapitalist left. The tenth participant did not fit in either category. Individualists emphasized the value of personal autonomy, felt immune from the sick society, and were enthusiastic about technological solutions; Collectivists emphasized both personal autonomy and a psychological sense of community, felt susceptible to the sick society, and were cautious or negative about technology. Although Individualists were generally more optimistic and enthusiastic that Collectivists, participants routinely displayed idiosyncratic patterns that require any categorization and generalization to be done cautiously. (Author/NRB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED266398

CG 018878

Personal Autonomy, Psychological Sense of Community, and Political Ideology

Dennis R. Fox

Michigan State University

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Dennis Fox

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Los Angeles, August 1985.

This paper is based on a dissertation completed at Michigan State University. A preliminary version of part of this paper was presented at the meeting of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, March, 1985.

Requests for reprints should be sent to Dennis R. Fox, 46 Second Street, Cambridge, MA 02141.

Abstract

Political debates often mask underlying differences in people's assumptions about "natural" behaviors and "appropriate" values. Ten individuals who had written letters to newspapers from nonmainstream perspectives (from right-wing libertarian to left-wing revolutionary communist) participated in three or four intensive, openended, semistructured interviews directed by a flexible interview guide. A qualitative thematic content analysis revealed five general themes: the Difficulty of Political Self-Definition; the Importance of Looking at Issues in Context; the Rejection of Mainstream Assumptions; the Belief That the United States is a Sick Society; and the Desire to Influence Others. Individualists emphasized the value of personal autonomy, felt immune from the sick society, and were enthusiastic about technological solutions; Collectivists emphasized both personal autonomy and a psychological sense of community, felt susceptible to the sick society, and were cautious or negative about technology. Although Individualists were generally more optimistic and enthusiastic than Collectivists, participants routinely displayed idiosyncratic patterns that require any categorization and generalization to be done cautiously.

Personal Autonomy, Psychological Sense of Community,

and Political Ideology

This study is part of a long-term attempt to gain insight into a perennial question that is crucial for effective political decisionmaking in a time of global unrest and psychological disorder: How are people's political ideologies related to their basic assumptions about human nature and appropriate primary values, particularly in terms of how they assess the desirability and practicality of competing solutions to societal problems?

Acrimonious political debates over the relative merits of one solution or another to problems such as world hunger, environmental degradation, and the prospects of nuclear war often mask significant underlying differences in what people consider to be "natural" motivations and behaviors. The social sciences have the potential to uncover these differences, to demonstrate the effect such assumptions have on decisionmaking, and perhaps ultimately to provide data to help correct widespread misconceptions. Social science, at least in theory, thus can contribute to the development of comprehensive approaches that take into account many more relevant factors than do the solutions often proposed in the normal course of political activity. The research reported here--an intensive qualitative interview study of ten individuals from a variety of nonmainstream political perspectives--was designed to help bring about greater understanding of the nature of political ideologies in order to make a contribution to the search for comprehensive solutions.

Psychologists, anthropologists, biologists, economists, and others

who have studied these matters more often than not disagree among themselves both within and across disciplines, and the mounting pile of empirical data does little to reduce the heat of the arguments. Conflicts over potential solutions to societal dilemmas still echo the differences between Hobbes and Rousseau, and someone who thinks of life as a "war of all against all" is likely to advocate somewhat different solutions than is someone who views people as inherently cooperative (though the literature on cooperation and interpersonal trust illustrates the complexity of determining when expectations affect behavior and when behavior affects expectations--e.g., Dawes, McTavish, & Shaklee, 1977; Kelley & Stahelski, 1970; Messé & Sivacek, 1979; Rotter, 1980). In the final analysis, although more data on the truth about human nature may eventually be of use in effectively advocating and implementing particular strategies, of more immediate relevance to political decisionmaking is what people <u>think</u> is the truth.

Also of importance is the investigation of what people think <u>other</u> people think. By a process of false consensus (Ross, Greene, & House, 1977), it might be true that most people assume that their own views are shared by the majority. However, some consideration should be given to the possibility that people who are dissatisfied with, or at least ambivalent about, the whole of modern life may be <u>incorrectly</u> assuming that their views are held only by a minority, through the somewhat opposite process of pluralistic ignorance (Newcomb, 1950), a process that ensures that "people will stay in line because their fellows do, yet, if they only knew that their comrades wanted to kick over the traces too, the

institutional conformity of the group would quickly vanish" (Katz & Schanck, 1938, p. 174). In other words, there may be more underlying support for fundamental social change than even its advocates think, a situation that would improve the prospects of social action if that underlying dissatisfaction could be tapped. As Hochschild (1981) pointed out, public opinion polls do not usually deal in depth with such questions, and simple ratings of "happiness" or "life satisfaction" remain at a superficial level; Hochschild in fact found much ambivalence about the dominant United States pattern of distributive justice among her small sample of both rich and poor Americans.

Although some psychologists have used the global term "human nature" in their work (e.g., Wrightsman's, 1964, Philosophy of Human Nature Scale, which measures trustworthiness, altruism, independence, strength of will, complexity, and variability), for the most part psychologists break human behavior into separate components for detailed study, leaving the broader questions to the philosophers. When looking at what the general public believes to be true for people in general, though, human nature remains a useful concept in attempting to link individual assumptions about psychological functioning to political ideology, especially when considering the fact that "It's only human nature" is often the final explanatory word in common explanations of a wide variety of behaviors.

Method

Although a qualitative, nonexperimental approach goes against the grain of most current social psychological research (see Fox, 1985a), a modified case-study method and thematic content analysis offered an

appropriate framework within which to understand the way the world looks to individuals on their own terms. The phenomenological underpinnings of qualitative research are increasingly being recognized as a useful starting point in examining a broad range of issues within psychology and the other social sciences (e.g., Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Berger, 1981; De Rivera, 1984; Ginsburg, 1979; Hochschild, 1981; Hogan, 1976; Kitwood, 1980; Patton, 1980; Reason & Rowan, 1981; Roberts, 1981; Winkler, 1985).

Research Participants

The primary focus of this research was a series of intensive, openended, semistructured interviews with ten individuals from a wide variety of political perspectives ranging from right-wing libertarianism to left-wing revolutionary communism. They included seven men and three women. Five were undergraduates (juniors and seniors) and five were current or recent graduate students or nonstudents. Six were in their twenties, three in their thirties, and one, a retired professor, was in his sixties (Table 1).

Seventeen potential participants, who had each written one or more letters to editors of local newspapers on controversial political topics during the winter of 1983, were sent nondeceptive letters requesting their assistance; the selection procedure was similar to that described by Patton (1980) as a "purposeful maximum variation sampling strategy." An emphasis was placed on locating individuals from different parts of the traditional liberal-conservative political spectrum who either advocated or opposed significant social change or who made a clear statement about

TABLE 1. Selected Background Characteristics

Participant	Age	Family Status	Work/School	Religious Status
Allen	21	Single	Senior (Philosophy)	Jewish background; now "agnostic or atheist (probably the second)"
Bill	21	Single	Senior (Communications); Store Manager	Presbyterian background; "confused agnostic", but "don't think about it much"
Christine	22	Single	Junior (Pre-med)	"Lost literal belief in Bible" but believes Jesus son of God; attends Church
David	36	Divorced	Writer; Driver (B.A. Education, Writing)	Methodist background; now "free-thinking, existentialist agnostic"; attends humanist church
Eve	21	Single	Junior (Community Health)	Born-again Christian fundamentalist; member of campus religious group
Paul	30	Married; two children	Assistant Professor of Humanities	"Former" Catholic; God's existence a "pretty unimportant question"
Roberta	26	Single	Lab Worker (M.A. Chemistry	"Religious," but only a Christian "culturally"; "spiritually, a pagan"
Scott	22	Single	Senior (Political Science)	Presbyterian background; now, "not a very good" Buddhist
Timothy	68	Married; two children	Semiretired History Professor	Practicing Catholic; children go to Catholic school; sees religion as civilizing
Victor	30	Married; no children	Graduate Student (Political Science)	Occasionally attends interdenominational church; Jesus "could well have been a democratic socialist"

TABLE 2. Political Self-Descriptions and Concerns

Participant	Self-Descriptions	Selected Concerns
	Individualists	
Allen	Libertarian Party member; Individualist	"Almost like an evangelist or a missionary" for libertarianism; Live by own values
Bill	Liberal realist; Liberal	Government in too many life areas; Need strength, leadership to fix toxic wastes, overpopulation;
Christine	Liberal politically, conservative economically; Individualist	ROTC member; People are afraid to be individuals; Need world government for survival
David	Liberal thinking conservative; Realist; Liberal; Humanist	Concerned about overpopulation, health, pollution, values education; Sees life as an exciting adventure
Eve	"Generally in a conservative category" [Not Individualist]	Responsibility to work on hunger and other problems, but world will be much as it is now when Jesus returns
	Collectivists	
Paul	Former member of a Communist revolutionary party	Individualism "useful attitude for a government to inculcate" to prevent change; Legitimate "core criticisms"
Roberta	Liberal; People-oriented humanist	Oppose US policy in Central America; Environmentalist; People insecure
Scott	Disillusioned socialist; Personal anarchy	Oppose coming "Fascist Age"; People scared, isolated, conforming
Timothy	Social democrat; Conservative on foreign policy	Anti-Communism, fanaticism; People are too doctrinaire; Sweden as positive socialist model
Victor	Democratic socialist; Out of mainstream	End political corruption caused by role of campaign contributions; People are politically uneducated

human nature. Of the 16 letters that were apparently received, 12 elicited an agreement to take part, though in the end the study was limited to 10. The participants did not receive, or inquire about, money or other direct compensation.

Procedure

Each participant was interviewed three or four times, either at home or in an office on campus. The total time spent with each ranged from 4½ to 7½ hours, not counting informal discussion before and after the taped interviews and during breaks; the mean length was just over 6 hours.

Participants were asked to express themselves on a variety of topics through a process of "focused interviewing" (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1956), loosely directed by a prepared interview guide (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). They were encouraged to bring into the discussion topics of interest to them and to not feel bound by the guide, which included a number of overlapping topic areas, each of which consisted of a series of questions that were modified depending on the participant. There was no attempt to maintain strict uniformity of content or topic order across interviews. The final version of the guide included the following areas:

1. Preliminary Discussion of the Participant's Letter(s) to the Editor
2. Perceptions of Social and Individual Problems and Solutions
3. Views of Human Nature
4. Political Values and Ideologies
5. Speculation About Utopia
6. Personal Background and Goals
7. Conception of Similarity to Others
8. Reactions to Interviewing

The interviews were taped and completely transcribed. The 517 pages of single-spaced transcripts, as well as descriptive and analytical notes that I made throughout the course of the research, were coded and analyzed

through a nonquantitative thematic content analysis (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975; Patton, 1980). This process focused on identifying value-related themes that characterized the group as a whole as well as themes that differentiated subgroups from one another.

Almost two years after the interviews, participants were sent copies of preliminary descriptions of their views as well as a preliminary version of this paper, and were invited to provide feedback. Six of them did provide fairly detailed comments and included updates on their lives; a seventh apologized verbally for not having the time to respond.

Results

Five broad general themes, and a number of related secondary themes, held true for all or most of the participants. Three additional themes differentiated between four "Individualists," who had in common a belief in overlapping aspects of right-libertarian, procapitalist political ideology, and five "Collectivists," who presented differing political perspectives on the anticapitalist left. The tenth participant, a moderately conservative born-again Christian, did not fit in either category. Table 2 presents a brief (and oversimplified) overview of the participants' general political concerns.

General Themes

The general themes included:

1. The Difficulty of Political Self-Definition--in particular, the refusal on the part of the participants to place themselves at any one point on the classic liberal-conservative spectrum, or to accept other labels without often-elaborate qualifications. Participants often

insisted they were liberal in some areas and conservative in others.

There were two especially noticeable secondary themes:

(a) Ambivalent Attraction of the Term "Liberal," even for those who insist that liberals as a group are naive, impractical idealists who don't understand human nature. (Bill: "I'm liberal in how I think things should be, but I think I'm conservative in how I think things are.")

(b) Circuitous Reasoning on Voting Decisions, with voting behavior not always predictable from the participants' political views. (Paul, the revolutionary communist, voted for Ronald Reagan "to create a situation" in which the problems of capitalism "would be clearer.")

2. The Importance of Looking at Issues in Context, taking into account the historical and cultural framework:

(a) Complexity of Political Issues, which are generally interrelated to a greater degree than most people think. (For Timothy, world problems are "so complicated" that their solution requires "balance" and the avoidance of "doctrinaire extremes.")

(b) Search for Multidisciplinary Knowledge, with importance placed on being a generalist rather a narrow specialist. (Victor: "I see too many specialists and not enough people that can make connections.")

(c) Confidence in Own Analytical Ability, for any of a number of reasons. (Christine: "There are very few things that make me madder than stupidity.")

(d) Interview Process as Self-Clarification, an opportunity to examine their views. (Eve: "That was one of the reasons I wanted to talk to you, and just to get my own ideas . . . more clear.")

3. The Rejection of Mainstream Assumptions about how society is or should be organized, regardless of their own particular solutions. (Allen sees his libertarianism as an ideology that "runs really counter to, you know, the standard wisdom.")

(a) Suspicion of Hidden Public Sympathy--despite the sense of feeling different from others, the participants believe that on some level their views are, in fact, reflective of more widespread but largely unrecognized (or unanalyzed) underlying dissatisfactions. (Scott: "I think the number of people . . . is growing that [my

views] would make sense to.")

(b) Gradual Attainment of Current Beliefs over a period of time, reflecting a slow conversion in response to increased knowledge gained through coursework, jobs, and other aspects of "the real world." (Roberta: "I'm starting to sound like a Marxist more and more.")

4. The Belief That the United States is a Sick Society, with greater complexity, mobility, and technological advances leading to greater stress, alienation, family breakdown, apathy, materialism, and other negative social and psychological consequences. (Such problems, according to David, "show that this society is not functioning well.") In particular, participants have:

(a) a Negative View of Television's Place in American Life, with people increasingly subject to manipulation by the media and elites. (David: This country is dictated by the TV set. I think the TV set usurps the entire naturalness of the human species.")

5. The Desire to Influence Others is particularly strong, but only in certain ways:

(a) Interest in Writing, Teaching, and Political Activity, with six of the participants attempting or planning to earn at least part of their living by writing, and several interested in teaching. (Paul: "I think I write the letters [to newspapers] for the same reason that I became an academic. And that is, I think it's important that people know relationships and understand the context of larger issues.")

(b) Lack of Interest in a Conventional Political Career, which is seen as somehow tainted, dishonest, or incapable of bringing about real change. (Bill: Although politics is "one of the more fascinating things to watch," he "would never get into it in a million years" because of "the insecurity. And the higher you climb in politics, the more you have to sell your soul.")

Differentiating Themes

With idiosyncratic exceptions, three additional themes generally differentiated four participants who were sympathetic to a range of right-

libertarian political and economic views (Individualists) from five who were sympathetic to an even greater variety of positions on the economic left (Collectivists). No other issue separated different groups as clearly as did the question of the virtues of capitalism, particularly in connection to attitudes toward the welfare system. Differences on other issues such as abortion, the Equal Rights Amendment, US policy in Central America, and the Nuclear Weapons Freeze were much less systematic, and sometimes nonexistent, a situation that makes the clear differences that do exist on issues of economics and individualism even more striking. Since no attempt was made in this study to obtain a sample that was fully representative of the general public, the views that are included do not equally represent all parts of the political spectrum.

Table 2 makes clear some of the different concerns expressed among participants even within each category. In fact, the Individualist and Collectivist labels themselves might not be easily embraced by some of the participants, given their difficulty with political self-definition, and many of the participants would object to being grouped with others in their own category. (For example, Allen's libertarian rejection of all governmental regulation is at odds with the call on the part of the other Individualists for increased government regulation of toxic wastes and with Christine's advocacy of a world government; similarly, Paul's revolutionary Communism is rejected by the social democrats Timothy and Victor.) The participants in each category are not assumed to be "representative" of others, and the comparisons discussed here are not meant to imply definitive descriptions of political ideology. The

comparisons are useful in providing some understanding of how the world looks to individuals of widely varying views, but the fact that it is individuals that are being described rather than group means should be kept in mind.

1. Individualism versus Collectivism. With allowance for a few exceptional circumstances, the Individualists believe that people should be held responsible for whatever happens to them in their own lives. There should be no legal responsibility to provide for others who do not work; the welfare society, which immorally takes from those who work to give to those who don't, should be modified and perhaps, eventually, dismantled. An individualistic self-oriented approach to life--in economics as well as in other areas--is natural and preferable. Books by Ayn Rand and similar writers are cited as having been influential in the development of their thinking. The Individualists see human nature as either competitive, aggressive, territorial, and animal-like, or as including cooperative elements that find their best expression within libertarian capitalism. They see themselves as "true individualists" and, to a lesser extent, as leaders. (Allen: "To say that the individual is paramount is to say that there's only one individual the human being must obey, [and that] is himself." David: "Capitalism is probably the finest system for addressing the human condition, the human spirit. The human need for turf, if you will, for property." Christine: "A lot of people are afraid of being individuals any more.")

In contrast, the Collectivists tend to believe that the system is structured against individuals at the bottom and that, consequently,

welfare is both a practical and a moral necessity; some form of income redistribution is seen as a worthwhile goal. People do have a personal responsibility to help others who are "casualties of the system." Human nature is seen as somewhat more mixed, and the selfish, competitive aspects of it--enhanced under capitalism--must be held in check to allow more room for the equally natural cooperative aspects. People are seen as inherently social, with societal changes interfering with the natural emphasis on cooperation and community; working or living in a group context is often seen as appealing or necessary. (Victor, despite saying that greed--"Let's just call it self-interest"--is "always going to be there," adds: "But what you can, I guess, emphasize, in seeking to fulfill your self-interests [is] that you are responsible to . . . your fellow man, your society." Roberta: "The way that I feel about people is that you can't live your life in isolation so you might as well be altruistic." Timothy: "I don't go along with the idea that . . . people who are unemployed . . . are just lazy. . . . If jobs are totally available, I think most people would want to work.")

2. Personal Consequences of the Sick Society. Although the Individualists and the Collectivists agree that, in general, American society is a sick society, the Individualists insist that they themselves are doing okay, and expect to do okay in the future, because they are capable, practical, and intelligent, true individualists who can flourish despite societal problems. They are personally optimistic about their own lives, and three of the four are fairly certain about what they want to do in the future. In fact, these same three enthusiastically view the US as

a near-perfect society--resembling a utopia--for autonomous individuals who are capable of taking advantage of it. (Christine: Utopia would be "any place where I could do work that is meaningful to me. . . . It's possible today in American society if you can find the right little niche.")

This Individualist theme of Personal Immunity from the sick society is absent for the Collectivists, who for the most part tend to see themselves, as they see others, as having Personal Susceptibility to the widespread consequences of a society with basic problems. Most are less optimistic, and less certain about their goals, than are the Individualists, and speak with much less enthusiasm. Rather than seeing the US in utopian terms, the Collectivists either see it in clearly dystopian terms, or, more generally in keeping with their political views, they conclude that only a few get the real benefits of the American economic system. (Scott: Thinking about American "misdeeds" in Central America "drives me into depression.")

3. The Prospect of Technological Solutions. In general, the Individualists exhibit Technological Enthusiasm, believing that in the long run, despite current societal problems, and assuming we don't destroy ourselves first, the world is going to be a much better place because of the virtues of science and technology. As Bill notes, the answer to problems such as toxic waste "is gonna have to come from science." Three of them speak admiringly of the libertarian-survivalist science fiction of Robert Heinlein, have histories of interest in science fiction in general, and expect to see the development of space colonies as a practical means

of resolving current crises. "Anything thinkable is possible," says David. "Mankind is capable of almost anything," adds Christine. Allen, a member of the Libertarian Party member, cautions that technology will advance to its fullest only if economic freedom under true capitalism is brought about.

The Collectivists, on the other hand, are noticeably less enthusiastic about what technology is likely to bring, demonstrating Technological Caution. Scott is completely negative, identifying technology with what he calls the "coming fascist age." The others have more mixed views, acknowledging the possible benefits of technological improvements but focusing more specifically on the view that political change is a necessary precondition for useful technological change; references to technology creating isolation are common. None mention Heinlein, and they express little interest in science fiction. (For Roberta, the thought of utopia conjures up thoughts of a "completely human-created environment" in which people grow up "without being in touch with nature." Scott: In "the perfect society in the future, you can do away with a lot of our technology and still have a good life.")

Discussion

Personal Autonomy and Psychological Sense of Community

Many of these general and comparative themes can be examined in terms of the relative importance placed by the individual on the values of personal autonomy and a psychological sense of community, which is one way of thinking about the distinction between agency and communion that was described by Bakan (1966). This linking of political ideology to personal

values is similar to the model presented by Rokeach (1973), who assessed ideology in terms of the relative ranking of the values of freedom and equality in an individual's value system, though the concept of psychological sense of community (Sarason, 1974) includes more than the formal economic equality implied by Rokeach. Also relevant here is the work of Tetlock (1983, 1984a, 1984b), who presented evidence that individuals whose political views are shaped by two values nearly equal in importance exhibit more complex, evaluatively inconsistent reasoning about particular issues than do those who emphasize a single primary political goal. Such a state of affairs seems to be evident among the participants in this study, and appears to extend beyond the cognitive level to include emotional consequences as well.

The Individualists, as might be expected, repeatedly emphasized the importance of personal autonomy in a variety of contexts, ranging from political views on the immorality of welfare to clear statements about the essential self-oriented quality of human nature, the importance of living according to one's own self-derived values, and the description of a perfect society in terms of what is best for themselves as individuals. They did not reject the importance of community and friendship, and they did not completely negate the importance of personal responsibility to try to help others, but they did not consider such responsibility and community to be the concern of the larger political system. The Individualists, as noted above, were more certain of their goals, more optimistic about their personal futures, and more convinced that they would flourish despite the problems faced by the rest of the society.

The Collectivists, on the other hand, while acknowledging the importance of increasing the control that people have over their own lives, generally saw such increased control in a wider political context, and focused more on the obstacles placed on such control by the economic and political system than on their own ability to live their own lives. Their view of human nature was mixed as well, more likely to emphasize cooperative, social aspects along with competitive ones. All the Collectivists felt a personal responsibility to work toward political change for the benefit of others, even to the extent that Scott and Roberta rejected what was, for them, the attractive possibility of joining rural communes because they believed that such a life course would not bring about social change. This weighing of personal and political preferences, which accompanies increased personal stress, is very different from the situation faced by the Individualists, whose current lives are not inconsistent with the lives they would lead even if their ideal societies did come about.

It would not be accurate to imply that the Individualists and the Collectivists in this study are diametrical opposites in their values, at different ends of a simple political spectrum. More accurate would be the conclusion that for the Individualists, personal autonomy is a single overriding goal clearly preferred over equality, societal responsibility for the poor, and similar aspects of a sense of community, which they either deemphasize or completely neglect. For the Collectivists, on the other hand, considering both autonomy and a sense of community to be of great importance results in greater difficulty in setting life goals and

greater ambivalence about their place in a society that they perceive to be more individualistically oriented then they themselves are. The Collectivists did vary greatly among themselves in this regard, ranging from Victor, who sought to combine his political work with becoming an entrepreneur, to Paul, who emphasized the need to give up some individuality for the sake of the Party and of the society.

Cautions in Categorizing Individuals

Interestingly, Victor, the only Collectivist with a generally competitive view of human nature, a democratic socialist who joked at one point that "When Eve gave Adam the apple, I think she tried to sell it to him for a buck twenty-nine," was the only Collectivist who expressed a strong interest in eventually becoming an entrepreneur; his general level of personal optimism more closely resembled that of the Individualists than that of the other Collectivists. Victor's mixed pattern, as well as other participants' idiosyncratic pattern-breaking tendencies on a number of subthemes, confirms the importance of remembering that all the participants, despite their placement in certain labeled categories, are individuals, and reducing their views and their lives to general summary statements, despite the grain of truth that might be thus observable, does them an injustice.

It quickly became clear to me during the extensive interviews that each of the participants departed in important ways from the stereotyped view of their particular ideology--both the larger society's stereotypes and my own. That is, to a great extent, they didn't fit the popular view of "typical" Libertarians, or Communists, or Fundamentalists, or even of

"liberals" and "conservatives." It is relatively easy to look through the interview transcripts and focus only on those statements that support a particular stereotyped view. Such a procedure, however, would reduce the complexity that is there to oversimplification.

Conclusions

The current research provides support for the view, which I've expressed elsewhere (Fox, 1985b), that a central focus on the often-contradictory needs and values of personal autonomy and a psychological sense of community can provide insight into political ideologies. Such insight is necessary if attempts to bring about positive social change are to succeed.

My own view is that, in the long run, only political ideologies and psychological theories that allow for the simultaneous attainment of both autonomy and a sense of community are likely to prove useful. That this view marks me as closer to the Collectivists than to the Individualists is clear. I want to emphasize, however, that my political disagreements with the participants--larger in some cases than others, but present in all cases--do not lead me to simple rejection of their views as "irrational" or "dogmatic." If anything, my interactions with them have reinforced my belief that intelligent, thoughtful people, beginning with different assumptions and values, can reasonably arrive at a multitude of well-supported political positions. The kind of openended interviews used here are crucial to allow complicated patterns of thought to be expressed.

Haan (1982) noted that "The justification for choosing equality as the moral ground are analytic, not empirical, but they are consistent with

psychological fact" (p. 1102). This view is in accord with the growing concern with psychological sense of community expressed by a broad range of psychologists and other social scientists (e.g., Bakan, 1966; Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Fromm, 1955; Sarason, 1974; Wachtel, 1983; see, also, Fox, 1985b). One challenge for those interested in bringing about positive, comprehensive social change is to learn how to make the broad range of ideologies reflected among the Collectivists more attractive to those who are steeped in variations of the dominant American Individualist ideology. At the same time, any Collectivist solution that fails to provide reasonable means for Individualists to meet their own needs and fulfill their own values is not likely to succeed. Arriving at satisfactory solutions will continue to be difficult; my hope is that this study will add to the understanding that is necessary to aid that process.

References

Bakan, D. (1966). The duality of human existence: An essay on psychology and religion. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Bellah, R. N., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W. M., Swidler, A., & Tipton, S. M. (1985). Habits of the heart: Individualism and commitment in American life. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Berger, B. M. (1981). The survival of a counterculture: Ideological work and everyday life among rural communards. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dawes, D. M., McTavish, J., & Shaklee, H. (1977). Behavior, communication, and assumptions about other people's behavior in a commons dilemma situation. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 35, 1-11.

De Rivera, J. (1984). Emotional experience and qualitative methodology. American Behavioral Scientist, 27, 677-688.

Fox, D. R. (1985a, May). Achieving ideological change within psychology. In T. Trabasso (Chair), Psychology, Ideology, and Social Change. Symposium conducted at the meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago.

Fox, D. R. (1985b). Psychology, ideology, utopia, and the commons. American Psychologist, 40, 48-58.

Ginsburg, G. P. (Ed.). (1979). Emerging strategies in social psychological research. Chichester, England: Wiley.

Haan, N. (1982). Can research on morality be "scientific"? American Psychologist, 37, 1096-1104.

Hochschild, J. L. (1981). What's fair? American beliefs about distributive justice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hogan, R. (1976). Personality theory: The personological tradition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Kelley, H. H., & Stahelski, A. (1970). The social interaction basis of cooperators' and competitors' beliefs about others. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 16, 66-91.

Kitwood, T. (1980). Disclosures to a stranger: Adolescent values in an advanced industrial society. London: Routledge.

Lofland, J., & Lofland, L. H. (1984). Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Merton, R. K., Fiske, M., & Kendall, P. L. (1956). The focused interview. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Messé, L. A., & Sivacek, J. M. (1979). Prediction of others' responses in a mixed-motive game: Self-justification or false consensus? Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37, 602-607.

Newcomb, T. M. (1950). Social psychology. New York: Dryden Press.

Patton, M. Q. (1980). Qualitative evaluation methods. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Reason, P., & Rowan, J. (Eds.). (1981). Human inquiry: A sourcebook of new paradigm research. Chichester, England: Wiley.

Roberts, H. (Ed.). (1981). Doing feminist research. Boston: Routledge.

Rokeach, M. (1973). The nature of human values. New York: Free Press.

Ross, L., Greene, D., & House, P. (1977). The false consensus phenomenon: An attributional bias in self perception and social perception processes. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 13, 279-301.

Rotter, J. B. (1980). Interpersonal trust, trustworthiness, and gullibility. American Psychologist, 35, 1-7.

Sarason, S. B. (1974). The psychological sense of community: Prospects for a community psychology. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Tetlock, P. E. (1983). Cognitive style and political ideology. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 45, 118-126.

Tetlock, P. E. (1984a, August). A value pluralism model of ideological reasoning. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Toronto.

Tetlock, P. E. (1984b). Cognitive style and political belief systems in the British House of Commons. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 46, 365-375.

Wachtel, P. L. (1983). The poverty of affluence: A psychological portrait of the American way of life. New York: Free Press.

Winkler, K. J. (1985, June 26). Questioning the science in social science, scholars signal a "turn to interpretation." Chronicle of Higher Education, pp. 5-6.

Wrightsman, L. S. (1974). Assumptions about human nature: A social-psychological approach. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.